

This is an Interview I conducted in January 1988 with Ilse, who was a chief nurse at a Lebensborn home in Steinhoring Germany from 1936 to 1945.

ME: I wanted to ask some questions about your service in the Lebensborn society, and regarding all the myths that surround the idea. So, will you tell me how you became involved in Lebensborn?

ILSE: Yes, I am happy to answer your questions and I trust you will ask some good ones, I look forward to dispelling the many false stories regarding the Fountain of Life that was created by RFSS Himmler. I will begin by telling you my history. I was attending school in Munich and first heard about Hitler and the National Socialist party in 1925 when I was 10 years old. My parents started paying attention to what was happening in politics, and so did I, joining the BDM and in 1933 I became a NSDAP member. I was attending nursing school in 1935, met my future husband who was on the staff of the RuSHA, he worked in the family welfare office that handled any issues arising from SS men in relationships, marriage, and marital problems, including child issues. It was because my husband was close to Himmler and Max Sollmann that, upon becoming a nurse, I was asked to work in a new venture that was being created to assist SS families who were having a child. I was assigned to the staff of the Lebensborn home in Steinhoring, which consisted of around 30 specialists and nurses from every medical discipline. To be accepted into the staff one had to be appointed by the RFSS, after passing a rigorous background check showing you had no criminal run-ins with the police or mental instability. One also needed to have SS membership, which required me to prove my racial purity.

ME: Can I ask you what all the “racial purity” is about? This is something that our schoolbooks and media mock and tell us is typical vulgar Nazism and a myth.

ILSE: Well, the world’s media is to this very day in the hands of the very people we tried to expose and root out of positions of influence. To them, race does not matter, it is a manmade creation that divides and creates borders. They are a people without borders, and fight a hidden war against the European people, to break down what unites us in a common bond. In Germany, they delighted in promoting the destruction of races by bringing in Africans, Indians, and Orientals to mix with German women who were left depressed and desperate due to lost spouses from the first war. RFSS Himmler was not the first to bring racial awareness to the attention of the masses; he was the first one who had the means to make it into a workable practice. What I mean by all this is that the first war decimated Europe’s Gene pool, some of the best men falling, many without having children. One of the first tasks of the NSDAP was rebuilding the family, making it possible for a man and woman to be happy and debt free so they could have as many children as they could to keep the nation growing. One task was to make sure Germany had German children to carry on the culture of the ancestors. These ancestors were Aryan, which is a blanket statement for white, but specifically refers to fair skin, eyes, and hair. The RFSS believed this type to be the purer form of the white race, which God created from the beginning. It was only through race mixing that darker traits crept into the bloodlines of the European peoples. This happened during various conquests and invasions in our long history. Enter the Jew into

Europe 900 years earlier, and this started the fraternization of Aryans with Jews. Some Jews wanted desperately to look like the very people they were living with, while some held to strict marriage rules; others looked to become as Aryan as they could, all while still being Jewish. This class was more interested in money and power, than keeping their Ashkenazi appearance. Over several decades, many a German fell to the advances and power of these aliens. NS holds that no one has the right to impose their will on the people, if it does not come from the people. The Jews in Germany were a tiny minority, yet owned a disproportionate size of business's and wealth, so their will was freely carried out. They used this wealth and power to divide and destroy the morals, and very structure that our faith, history, and culture had built. Because of this, they are seen as an enemy within who can't be trusted, and who will never be German. The SS was created as a way for Germans to return to the ways of our ancestors, to preserve the culture we inherited. For those wanting to join, they had to prove that they had no race mixing in their bloodline for at least 200 years. This was designed to keep out any of the Germans who had blood from the non-whites who were brought into Germany, including Jews. The RFSS once gave a speech, in which he said, "that it should always be the goal of every person on earth to want their children to look like them, to carry on the very culture that they were born into". This is what racial purity is all about, keeping intact what has been. To this idea, we were dedicated.

ME: Thank you. Can you tell me what life was like in the home?

ILSE: Yes. The Lebensborn homes were set up so that German women who had gotten pregnant could come and receive around the clock care. This included married wives of SS officers, NCO's, and enlisted men; there was no class structure in the SS like in the old aristocratic Germany. Everyone was equal and deserving of love and respect. Our homes were like a resort, the food was good and it was a very relaxing atmosphere. We also allowed women who were not married. This caused us problems in regards to those who looked down on girls who became pregnant without being married. Soldiers are soldiers, they have male needs, and there are women who succumb to those needs, the results can sometimes be unwanted. Abortion in Germany was a social norm before NS, everyone was encouraged to be immoral, and if the worst happened, you just made your bad decision go away. Under NS rule, a woman could only have an abortion if it was determined the child was damaged, or the mother's life was at risk. SS men who got a girl pregnant were ordered to the RuSHA for a formal inquiry as to their intentions as to remaining with her. If she wanted to get away from her parents, or disapproving family, she was welcomed to our home. So regardless if a woman was married or single she was welcomed and well cared for. The youth organizations worked to instill sexual morality in our youth to curb unmarried pregnancies, but the morals of the Weimar era was still evident in some of our people, even the SS. It is not true, that young, unmarried girls were encouraged to have sex and bear a child for the Fuhrer, this is enemy propaganda. Until the war started, most of our patrons were wives who just wanted to be pampered for a couple of months. SS officers paid monthly to give their wives this privilege and unique experience. When a woman arrived, she was given a room to stay in and make her living quarters, much like a hotel. She was examined by doctors, who established her health, and looked for any risks she may have. Married wives would come to the

homes because they may have felt lonely while their husbands were away, or they just wanted to be around other SS wives whom they would have a common bond. Unwed mothers often were out on their own for the first time and scared, the homes offered expert care and a relaxing environment. Once in, the expectant mothers would be waited on hand and foot, everything paid for by the SS. Class's for first time mothers would be held to foster the natural instincts of a mother. Every class was designed to instill confidence and remove any fear of having a child. The men could also attend classes for new fathers as well, and there were councilors available for any relationship issues. Something that was common for women was husbands who were stressed and abusive. This caused chaos for the family, and scared children. The SS was very proactive to make sure all stressors were removed. A happy family is a productive and fruitful family. Money worries were taken away, health care was free, jobs plentiful, and there was hope for the future. Instances of spouses who were abused or harmed were almost non-existent, and the RuSHA investigated any claims and could refer them to a court of honor. I believe I only saw one instance of a SS officer abusing his wife, and he was a drunk and dismissed from the SS. His wife was protected and granted a divorce. She stayed with us a few months after birth. A mother to be was encouraged to have an exercise regimen, get outside daily, sun bathe, eat well, and meditate to keep her mind and body ready for giving life. When the time came, she would give birth with SS doctors and staff, and then the homes took on the form they were meant to be. The newborn would receive round the clock attention from skilled staff. Any illness detected was quickly treated. Nurses would take the child daily to give mom a break, so she could go out and get away for a while if she wanted. These homes were created to take all the stress and worry out of the entire pre-birth, birth, and post-birth experience. The mother and child could stay as long as they liked, but most chose to return home a few weeks after birth.

ME: Why is this program so misunderstood? I was taught girls were forced to go to these homes to get pregnant by paying SS officers.

ILSE: Ha Ha, I sometimes still laugh at the ignorant propaganda our enemies spread, without really accepting what we told them we did. Truth is the first casualty in war; you want your people to feel good about what they are fighting for. Part of that is to make your enemy seem evil, with evil intentions. The allies were, and still are masters of the propaganda war. They won that war easily. NS Germany was a state of the highest caliber, and the allies were very jealous of what we achieved, so they went to war to keep us from gaining more influence on the continent. In 1945, I was still at the home in Steinhoring, but I had been promoted to other duties, which included going to other homes in Europe. Therefore, I had knowledge of what was happening in Norway, France, and Poland. The first contact I had with the enemy was US officers coming to our home because someone told them we were a brothel for SS men. Our head of the home told them we were a nursery, and we desperately needed food and supplies. They left and returned quite quickly, I have a feeling they saw the pretty nurses as tempting targets, as they also brought wine. They were quite inquisitive as to why a local told them we were a brothel. When they discovered we were part of the SS, their minds went wild with stories they heard from the ranks. I learned English in school, as many Germans did so I could talk to them slightly, so I and a Dr. tried to explain this was a nursery for children. The Red Cross was brought in to insure food and

medicine was available, and then all the interrogation's started happening, the Lebensborn was accused of kidnapping children and euthanasia. People came forward to accuse us of all sorts of crimes, luckily the normally vengeful allies found no evidence that corroborated the claims.

ME: Speaking of this, what was the average German's perception of the Lebensborn?

ILSE: Most German's knew nothing about us, but those who lived by the homes were obviously curious. In Steinhoring, we had many visits by officers, high party officials, and foreign dignitaries. This was a special pilot by the RFSS, and this model was looked on as a future service to everyone. Since it was a SS funded home, we would occasionally receive requests from the local church's to take in a pregnant girl who didn't know the father etc. They were advised to seek help from other NS welfare organizations. This caused some disdain, as we were looked upon as being elitist and uncaring, but this was for SS members only, much like a private spa. There were times though were emergencies caused us to help. We had a woman who went in labor who lived close by, she was brought to us and our staff delivered her baby, and cared for her. We never turned anyone away who was in a dire situation and needed immediate help. Sadly, at wars end, many Germans, for reasons I do not fully understand, said the vilest things about us, and the children under our care. I suppose this is where many of the rumors of stud farms, and forced breeding camps came from. There were many ex-communists who were still alive and well in NS Germany, and I believe they were given special platforms to tell their side of the story, the way a communist would want it to be told, and being a victim was the in vogue thing to do after the war, everyone was a NS victim.

ME: What was it like during the war?

ILSE: The war brought many changes to us, one main change was we really became nurseries for SS mothers who needed a place to watch their babies while they did their duty and worked. Our staff expanded to accommodate also any military pregnancy, SS or not. The RuSSHA started to open other homes across Europe, due to SS men having relations with foreign women. This was very big in France and Norway. Our strict racial standards were even bent to some degree, since the overall main goal was to allow soldiers who may never return to carry on their seed. In most cases in the occupied areas, it was a simple matter of security, to allow a woman who was in love with a German to have her child without being judged or threatened. There was more than one case where a woman and her child were murdered, just because the father was German. I will speak of a matter that we were blamed for, but was in reality a good deed. Due to allied bombings in the occupied areas, parents who no longer wanted a child, arrests, sickness, and deaths, a child would be brought to the Lebensborn for adoption to a suitable family. Our enemies have had a smoking gun with this. We never stole children, or kidnapped anyone, if a child was forcefully removed, it was only due to a crime or neglect, and this rarely happened. Contrary to what the victors say. I was temporarily assigned to do checkups on children coming from the east who were being put up for adoption, and the story was always the same. Parents abandoned the child, died or were sick with no other relatives to take them in, or war casualties.. There were a few instances where a child was forcefully removed due to abuse, or severe mal

nutrition. In a case like that, NS welfare agencies would attempt to put the child with other family, if none could be found they could be put up for adoption.

ME: How many children do you think came through during the war?

ILSE: I am only guessing, but it had to be in the hundreds, it did not seem like a significant number, and there were other German organizations, like the Red Cross who tried to help anyone who could not be reunited with family, but in wartime, this was not always possible. Some of the “kidnappings” I believe were situations where the family fled with the red army, becoming separated, and the child ended up with us. After the war, the family went looking, and naturally blamed the enemy for stealing the child. We were a welfare organization, and only wanted to help people, not cause pain. So remember, truth, is the first casualty of war. In Norway, there were many children born to women who had relations with German soldiers. Our home was open to everyone there, not just SS units. The women were brought in to protect them from spiteful neighbors and the resistance. These were innocent children, but at wars end they were forced to leave the land they were born in. Enemies made up the same old stories of SS breeding camps, and stigmatized these children as being some form of a mutant. Denmark did the same thing. Many of these children died because of this hate, and it is covered up to this very day. German soldiers had no hate in their hearts towards the people in lands they were forced to occupy, and naturally, the women were curious to see what this enemy was like. German personnel were encouraged to get out and meet the population, to let them know they meant no harm to anyone. Good friends were made, and as a result, there were many pregnancies. Since abortions were outlawed unless the pregnancy threatened the mother or child, the women had to bear this burden. Our homes were the perfect place where she could get away for a few months of pampering. Even foreign workers, who volunteered to help the Reich by the hundreds of thousands, were welcomed into our homes during the war. What started out as homes for SS wives and girlfriends turned into a haven for those with children trying to survive a terrible war.

ME: can you tell me what it was like for you after the war?

ILSE: It was terrible and terrifying. My husband remained on the staff of the RuSShA during the whole war; he was in a crucial role for the welfare of soldiers families so not eligible to enlist. He often times was in Berlin, and I chose to stay in Munich so we did not get to see each other often for weeks at a time. We tried having a child, as it was our duty, but never succeeded, until 1948. He was able to leave Berlin, on orders to come to Munich, and then the Americans under General Patton captured him. He was released after only a few months and we were reunited. I was left alone for the most part, but was often harassed by allied soldiers who wanted to trade goods for favors. I made sure to never walk alone, and was in constant fear of being attacked. We German women had a disdain for the many girls and women who succumbed to the gloating allies, but I also understood the desperation that came with needing to eat. The home in Steinhoring stayed open after the war, but the Red Cross and allied medical personnel now controlled the home. Most of us were allowed to stay with the children who were left, others were asked to go to area hospitals that were not destroyed. The home was eventually evacuated

and closed, I had already left and was asked to join the staff of a private hospital in Munich, my husband was brought into a business by an old comrade. I was saddened to learn of the horrible fate of many of the children born in to our homes. They bore no guilt, yet hypocritical people who could not overcome their petty differences to care for children treated them as defective or immoral. I ran into some trouble in the 50's as anyone affiliated with the Lebensborn, was sought out to answer to kidnapping charges. I strongly denied their accusations, and defended our mission, this brought attention down on me as I called the allies liars and the true war criminals. The occupational government did not like that and threatened to jail me, so I have largely remained silent all these years, my family and children deserved a mother. In retrospect, the Lebensborn program was revolutionary in its actions, giving women a safe, comfortable, and supportive place to have a child with the best care. I can attest that it was not a SS "sex farm" as our media has reported; we only wanted to care for those who were bearing the future of our people.